

2002 Van Wert–Roselms tornado

On November 10, 2002, a violent tornado struck the city of Van Wert and the community of Roselms in Ohio.^{[1][2][3]} The National Weather Service rated the worst of the damage F4 on the Fujita scale, with several homes and businesses, including the Twin Cinemas, sustaining F4 damage in the city of Van Wert.^{[1][4][5]}

Tornado summary

The tornado touched down approximately four miles (6.4 km) northeast of the village of Willshire, Ohio in Van Wert County and began moving northeast towards the city of Van Wert.^{[1][2]} Right after touching down, the tornado rapidly intensified to F4 intensity as it crossed Zook Road approximately five miles (8.0 km) southwest of Van Wert.^[2] Around Zook Road, a 75-year-old man was killed when the tornado destroyed his house at F4 intensity.^{[2][3][6]} The National Weather Service documented that he was attempting to shield his wheelchair-bound wife when the tornado struck.^[3] As the tornado continued into Ven Wert, it maintained F4 intensity.^[2] In Ven Wert, 43 homes and five businesses were destroyed and 164 homes and 27 businesses were damaged.^[2] The Twin Cinemas and the five buildings in the Vision Industrial Park sustained F4 damage.^[2] In the Twin Cinemas, 60 people, mostly children, were inside watching a movie when the tornado destroyed the building.^[2] Vehicles from the cinema parking lot were thrown into the seats of the cinema.^[2] An 18-year-old was killed after driving near the cinema and having his car thrown into the cinema seats.^{[2][3]} Three county engineering buildings were also destroyed by the tornado in Van Wert.^[2] After passing through the Vision Industrial Park, several homes and business in Van Wert sustained F3 to F4 damage.^{[2][7]}



F4 damage to the Twin Cinemas in Van Wert

The tornado continued northeast out of Van Wert and crossed into Paulding County, where it struck the community of Roselms. Only one building remained standing in Roselms after the tornado.^[2] Every structure in Roselms sustained up to F3 damage, and the entire nine-mile (14 km) track of the tornado through Paulding County was rated F3 by the National Weather Service.^{[2][8]} The Dayton Daily Newspaper reported that in Paulding County, 23 homes, 32 barns, and a church were completely leveled and 19 additional homes were

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A photograph of the tornado taken by an Ohio State Trooper

Meteorological history	
Duration	70 minutes
Formed	November 10, 2002, 3:15 p.m. EST (UTC−05:00)
Dissipated	November 10, 2002, 4:25 p.m. EST (UTC−05:00)
F4 tornado	
<i>on the <u>Fujita scale</u></i>	
Highest winds	207–260 mph (333–418 km/h)
Overall effects	
Fatalities	4 ^[1]
Injuries	17 ^[1]
Damage by	>\$30 million (2002 USD) ^[2]
Areas affected	<u>Van Wert</u> and <u>Roselms, Ohio</u>
Part of the 2002 Veterans Day weekend tornado outbreak and tornado outbreaks of 2002	

damaged.^[9] The Washington Township building was also leveled by the tornado.^[6] The tornado continued northeast at F3 intensity as it crossed into Putnam County.^[8] In Putnam County, the tornado destroyed a mobile home in Continental, killing a man and his wife.^{[2][3]} After traveling seven miles (11 km) through the county, the tornado rapidly weakened to F0 intensity just before it crossed into Defiance County.^[2] While traveling three miles (4.8 km) through Defiance County, the tornado skipped and caused F0 damage to five homes and some outbuildings before crossing into Henry County.^[2] In Henry County, the tornado continued to skip and caused F0 damage to outbuildings and trees along a path of 12 miles (19 km). The tornado lifted approximately two miles (3.2 km) southeast of Malinta.^[2]

In total, the tornado killed four people and injured 17 others along a path of 53 miles (85 km), while reaching a peak width of 880 yards (800 m).^{[2][10]} The tornado caused at least \$30 million (2002 USD) in damage just in the city of Van Wert.^[2]

Aftermath

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration later stated that out of the entire Veterans Day weekend tornado outbreak, which included a total of 76 tornadoes, the Van Wert–Roselms tornado was the most remembered, due to "the heroic efforts of [Scott Shaffer] at the Van Wert Cinemas. After hearing the tornado warning that was broadcasted over the county's warning system, the manager led 60 patrons to interior hallways and restrooms. This was only a few minutes before the tornado destroyed the theater. Besides leveling the building, 3 cars were tossed into the seats that were previously occupied by moviegoers, many of which were children."^{[5][11][12]}

See also

- Tornadoes of 2002
- 2002 Veterans Day weekend tornado outbreak

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